

DRAWINGS

Attached please find formal replacement FIGS. 1-2, for the originally-submitted FIGS. 1-2. The new formal replacement figures now include the "PRIOR ART" legend, and add no new matter.

REMARKS

Claims 1-24 are pending in this application. Attached hereto is a complete listing of all claims in the application, with their current status listed parenthetically. By this Response, claims 2-9 have been amended, and are presented with markings indicating their current amendments. Claims 1 and 10-24 have been cancelled, without prejudice to further prosecution.

Allowable claims

In the Office Action, the Examiner states that claim 9 is objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. In response, Applicant amends claim 9 to include the elements of claim 1 (the base claim) and also amends claims 2-8 to now depend from amended claim 9. Applicant respectfully submits that claims 2-9 are now in condition for allowance.

Drawing changes

In the Office Action, the Examiner objects to FIGS. 1-2, and requests the addition of the "PRIOR ART" legend. In response, Applicant has amended FIGS. 1-2 as suggested by the Examiner.

Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner approve these drawing amendments to facilitate the allowance of this application.

Claim objections

In the Office Action, the Examiner objects to claims 2, 3, 14, 15, 17, 23 and 24. As claims 14, 15, 17, 23 and 24 have been cancelled without prejudice, these objections are moot. Claims 2 and 3 have been amended as suggested by the Examiner.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

In the Office Action, claims 1-8 and 10-24 stand rejected as unpatentable under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over pending U.S. patent application 2002/0075972 ("Richards '972") or U.S. patent 6,571,089 ("Richards '089") in view of at least one of: U.S. patent 6,549,567 ("Fullerton '567"); pending U.S. patent application 2002/0191690 ("Pendergrass"); U.S. patent 5,677,927 ("Fullerton '927"); and U.S. patent 6,968,130 ("Pan"). Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection.

As claims 1 and 10-24 have been cancelled without prejudice to later prosecution, the rejection of these claims are now moot.

Regarding claims 2-8, Applicant submits that amended claim 9 is now allowable (see above), and claims 2-8 have been now been amended to depend from claim 9, and thus are also now allowable. See M.P.E.P. § 2143.03.

Therefore, Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner reconsider and withdrawal this rejection.


Conclusion

Applicant believes that this Response has addressed all items in the Office Action and now places the application in condition for allowance. Accordingly, favorable reconsideration and allowance of claims 2-9 at an early date is solicited. The \$510 fee for the Petition for Extension of Time, along with the requisite documents are included with this Response. Should any issues remain unresolved, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date



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